

Judge Samuel W. Dexter House,
Dexter, Michigan.

HABS No. Mich. 116
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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Michigan

Historic American Buildings Survey
F. Orla Varney, District Officer
313 Garfield Bldg., Detroit, Mich.

JUDGE SAMUEL W. DEXTER HOUSE
Dexter, Washtenaw County, Michigan.

81 DEX
1-

Owner Mr. Thomas Bell, Dexter, Mich.

Date of Erection: 1826-1827

Architect Unknown, but it is believed Judge Dexter brought the plans with him when he returned to Dexter from Massachusetts.

Builder: Judge Samuel W. Dexter

Present Condition: Very poor.

Number of Stories: Two

Materials of Construction: Hewn oak frame; white wood clapboards and cornice; shingle roof. The original building had very good and fine detail and should be preserved for its historical and architectural value. An addition was put on the house at a later date of very poor detail.

Other Existing Records: None discovered.

Additional Data: The interior contained four mantels, no trace of which is left except the framing for chimneys.

Samuel W. Dexter was born in Boston in 1792. He was the eldest son of distinguished statesman Samuel Dexter. He graduated from Harvard University. Orthodox Unitarian. Moved to Athens on the Hudson River.

In 1824 he came to Michigan, bringing \$80,000.00 with him. The first log house in Webster was built by him.

In 1825 he returned to Massachusetts but came back to Dexter with his family in 1826 to reside in this house which he built on the bank of Huron River very near the present railroad. The house was used for many years as a place of worship for four or five different denominations and was also home for different preachers

Judge Samuel W. Dexter House (Continued)

Additional Data: (Continued)

who came to conduct services. He established a private Post Office in his own house.

1827 the first town meeting was held at Dexter House.

1830 Judge A. D. Crane came to Dexter and describes it as having only three dwellings, belonging to Samuel W. Dexter, Dr. Cyril Nichols and S. W. Foster, and one mill.

1831 First hotel was built for Judge Dexter by Edward Torrey (destroyed by fire 1860).

1832 Dexter and Romeroy built a sawmill on present site of Dover Mill.

1833 Dexter conducted colony of 73 persons from New York to Ionia. He bought immense tracts of land in Webster, Scio, Dexter, Lima and Superior. Outside of Washtenaw County, in Schiawasse, Lenawee, Ionia and Saginaw.

1835 Judge Dexter laid out Saginaw City; donated land for Court House.

1838 Dexter was a flourishing village. Flour mill with two run of stone saw mill; 5 stores, druggist, grocers, doctors, etc. Many buildings being erected. Judge Dexter expected Dexter to grow into a large place, hence streets wider than those of other villages in Washtenaw County. Arranged like spokes of a wheel.

F. Orla Varney
F. Orla Varney, District Officer
June 30, 1937.

AW 9/1/37